DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 455 382 CE 081 996

AUTHOR Church, Kathryn; Fontan, Jean-Marc; Ng, Roxana; Shragge, Eric

TITLE Social Learning among People Who Are Excluded from the Labor Market. Part One: Context and Case Studies. NALL Working Paper.

INSTITUTION Ontario Inst. for Studies in Education, Toronto. New Approaches to Lifelong Learning.

SPONS AGENCY Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Ottawa (Ontario).

REPORT NO NALL-WP-11-2000

PUB DATE 2000-00-00

NOTE 25p.

AVAILABLE FROM NALL: New Approaches to Lifelong Learning, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, 252 Bloor Street West, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5S 1V6 ($3). Tel: 416-923-6641; Fax: 416-926-4725. For full text: http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/depts/sese/csew/nall/res/11sociallearning.htm.

PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS Adult Education; Case Studies; Community Education; *Community Organizations; Developed Nations; *Dislocated Workers; Employer Employee Relationship; Foreign Countries; Global Approach; *Informal Education; *Job Placement; Job Training; Labor Force Development; Self Help Programs; Socialization; *Unemployment; Unions

IDENTIFIERS *Canada

ABSTRACT

This working paper lays groundwork for a Network for New Approaches to Lifelong Learning study on informal learning by people displaced from the labor market or chronically unemployed, in the context of community organizations. Section 1 examines the context and two particularly significant features--wider changes in the nature of work and related changes in the welfare state--that arise from structural changes caused by globalization of the economy. Section 2 describes three community organizations working with people excluded from the mainstream labor market that are attempting to create new forms and traditions of labor under considerable pressure to place people in the mainstream labor market. (The Homeworkers' Association is an example of how a labor union responded to work restructuring by departing from traditional tactics of collective bargaining and strike action in favor of creative alliances and innovative strategies for working with displaced workers. Chic Resto-Pop illustrates the complex interaction among business development, job training, political advocacy, and linkages to the wider culture of the community movement. A-Way Express Couriers demonstrates similar connections from within a framework of self help and with a goal of not integration but building an alternative labor market that redefines, accommodates, and organizes the capacities of a heavily stigmatized community.) Section 3 provides comments on directions the research is pursuing into informal learning. (Contains 52-item bibliography.) (YLB)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

NALL Working Paper #11-2000

ED 455 382

Social Learning
Among People Who Are Excluded From The Labour Market
Part One: Context and Case Studies

Kathryn Church, Jean-Marc Fontan, Roxana Ng, Eric Shragge

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

PROBLEMATIC

CONTEXT
Redefining wage labour
An ideology of entrepreneurship
The state and the redefined role of community organizations

CASE STUDIES
UNITE – Homeworkers get organized
Research
Labour adjustment activities
Coalition building
Formation of the Homeworkers' Association (HWA)
CHIC RESTO-POP – Social Entrepreneurship as Work Readiness
Wider Context
Hochelaga-Maisonneuve
Chic Resto Pop: Practices and Issues
A-WAY EXPRESS COURIERS – Using the Economy to Develop the Community
Psychiatric survivor communities
Three phases of organizing
Implications
A-Way Express: A Success Story

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CE 080 556

DISCUSSION

FINAL WORDS

NOTES

BIBLIOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTION

This document is the first of two working papers from a research team within the Network for New Approaches to Lifelong Learning (NALL).

The purpose of this working paper is to lay some essential groundwork for a discussion of our research, currently underway within three sites:

- The Homeworkers' Association, (HWA) a project of UNITE, a labour union in Toronto. Working with unemployed members and homeworkers in the garment and textile sector who are mainly immigrant women, this organization has developed new approaches to training in partnership with government and employers.
- Chic Resto Pop, a community restaurant located in a low-income, working-class community in Montreal. This is a business (entreprise d'insertion) designed as a place of training for people on social assistance.
- A-Way Express, a courier service that is operated by psychiatric survivors in Toronto. A-Way uses business development not only to improve employees' material conditions but also as a vehicle to radically redefine their lives: democratic processes and personal redefinition are primary goals.

The paper is organized in three sections. First, we examine the broader context that has given rise to our research project. Context is important because it defines and shapes experiences for people who face exclusion from the labour market. A couple of features are particularly significant here: wider changes in the nature of work, and related changes in the welfare state. Both arise from structural changes brought about by globalization of the economy.

Second, using case material, we outline the particular situation in which our selected organizations were founded and developed their practice. Each case illustrates changing context and related responses. We are looking at these initiatives in order to understand how the larger context shapes participant experiences. In turn, we look at how they respond to and innovate around constant structural change.

Third, as a segue to a second working paper, we provide some initial comments on the directions that we are pursuing with our research into informal learning.

PROBLEMATIC

NALL is a five-year research initiative funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (Livingstone, 1999). The network is comprised of almost 70 academic researchers and their community partners, collaboratively engaged in over 40 projects across Canada. Our focus is on informal learning as it is accomplished by people who are displaced from the labour market or chronically unemployed, in the context of community organizations.

As a research team, we are differently located in terms of ethnicity, gender, language and geography. Three of us are tenured within the university while one is an independent researcher. Whether because of our actual location or our approach to research and politics, we often feel marginal. We are "bridge"

people: the university-based members play active roles in providing academic support to community organizations and social movements; the community-based member plays an active role in carrying the issues and knowledge/s of community groups into academe.

In 1996, at NALL's opening session of the research network, it became obvious that the four of us were already investigating similar processes within different communities. Using the Network's resources, we joined forces to enrich our individual projects and to extend them into collaborative work that will enable us to go beyond what any one of us might have generated alone. In the process, we learned to appreciate how each of us sees the world as well as how the particular contexts in which we work differ and shape our understanding of the issues. We learned to "work across difference" to pull together common elements (Narayan, 1988). Primary among them is a focus on the role of wage labour in personal and social re/definition. In other words, beyond material support, a job is a desired end.

NALL's basic objectives are:

- to document current relations between informal learning, formal (full-time school programs), and non-formal (course-based continuing education) learning;
- to identify major social barriers to integrating informal learning with formal and non-formal programs;
- to support new program initiatives that promise to overcome such barriers.

At the start of the research network, NALL members understood informal learning to be:

> ...any activity involving the pursuit of understanding, knowledge or skill which occurs outside the curricula of institutions providing educational programs, courses or curricula. It is distinguished from everyday perceptions and general socialization by people's own conscious identification of the activity as significant learning. The basic terms of informal learning are determined by the individuals and groups who choose to engage in it, without the presence of an institutionally authorized instructor (NALL, 1999).

At first, we tried to fit our work into the formal, non-formal and informal categories of learning that shape the Network's conversation. However, over time and through discussion, we felt the need to reconstruct the definition of informal learning because the one noted above seems inappropriate to the learning that is happening in our sites. Through field observations and interviews, we have identified three kinds of informal learning happening in the community sector.

The first is "organizational learning." By this, we mean the ways in which community organizations come to understand how to operate and position themselves within an entrepreneurial culture. Their role in a restructured economy is not immediately obvious, and is sometimes actively resisted. There are no courses they can take and the implicit curriculum is sometimes obscured, but still it must be learned – and quickly – if they are to survive. Especially significant is learning how to build programs that will fly in the new economy and receive viable social support while simultaneously carrying forward historical concerns for social and economic justice. This is what psychiatric survivors refer to as "the business behind the business" of their economic development practice (Church, 1997). It invariably requires becoming adept at a new language in order to secure and sustain funding. For example, in Ontario, community organizations have learned to replace the forbidden term "advocacy" with still acceptable references to "public education."

The second form of informal learning at work in this sector is "solidarity learning." All of the organizations we are studying are immediately concerned with preparing participants for labour market (re)entry or creating an alternative market. However, only some of the activities that participants engage in are directly related to the curriculum of the program and the job. Others take place through social interaction in and around formal organizational practices. Thus, our interest in these organizations is not so much in the formal outcomes of business development or job placement as it is in the learning that takes place simply because these settings bring (often isolated) people together. For example, during a

break in a meeting of the Homeworkers' Association, one of the women who had been an activist in the clothing trade in Hong Kong explained to others how to negotiate more effectively with employers. The conversation was impromptu and unrelated to the meeting agenda. We link this and other similar observations to issues of political identification, citizenship, participation in decision-making and the building of social solidarity.

The third kind of informal learning we have identified is what we would term "reshaping the definition of self." Part of the agenda of community organizations has always been to achieve individual change through building new skills and capacities. That is explicit in the curriculum. Beyond that, and especially in the current political climate, participants go through more subtle transformations as a result of being immersed in the organizational culture and their contact with other participants. In an "entreprise d'insertion" such as Chic Resto Pop, there is group process related to skill development and work readiness but personal change can come about because of the wider culture of the organization or the individuals and/or situations encountered in the setting. Similarly, some employees of A-Way Express characterize the business as a place of learning about self. "When I became ill, I felt as if I lost all of my skills," said one. "The only one I retained was keeping personal hygiene. I lost all sense of personal identity. Over time, being at A-Way slowly helped bring back things about myself. Even now, after many years, there are still changes going on." Interesting that those skills include becoming more authoritative, or "bold," in the performance of the job. What goes on, then, for some, is both recovery and reshaping personal identity.

We decided to refer to all three of these types as "social learning" because the learning that occurs is embedded in social interaction whether between participants, between different levels of a community organization, between organizations or, significantly, between organizational representatives and their funders. It is important to note, as well, that this social learning is often unanticipated, incidental (thought not insignificant), and dynamic in nature. It is for these reasons that we think of the work placement/creation function of these community organizations as the excuse that makes the real curriculum possible.

CONTEXT

Redefining wage labour

Our research sites were all established within the last ten to fifteen years. They have been initiated from the community sector at least partially in response to broad economic and social redefinition. Traditionally, wage labour has been the primary source of income and relation of regulation for most of the population. However, in recent years, precarious and part-time work has grown, and there is an increase in related poverty.

Since the mid-seventies in developed countries, the crisis of work is expressed in a variety of ways (Rifkin, 1995 ; Fusulier, Fontan, 1998), often with little relation to fluctuations in official unemployment levels. As we can see at the end of the nineties and the first year of the first decade of the new century, even if Canadian unemployment rates have diminished, there is a core group of people who remain unemployed (Yalnizyan, 2000). Also, many of the people who recently joined the work force ended up in unstable jobs that make them working poor (Schellenberg, Clark, 1995 ; Lochhead, Ross, 1997 ; Piketty, 1997).

The redefinition of the labour market is linked to a number of global factors (Rifkin, 1995; Hayden, 1999). Since the end of the seventies, technological changes and shifts in production to countries with cheap pools of labour have contributed to high levels of unemployment. The traditional unionized blue-collar job is diminishing replaced by irregular jobs in the service sector -- non-unionized and low-wage. The general context of these shifts is one in which governments abandoned a commitment to maintaining high levels of employment. Another source of unemployment is reduction in the size of government itself and the shedding of many public sector workers. With post-Fordism, "just in time" production has required a flexible labour market unencumbered by permanent jobs, trade unions, and

collective agreements (Boyer, 1995). We do not mean to imply here that all permanent jobs have disappeared -- only that there are significantly fewer of them. New, well-paid jobs are being produced by the economy but in areas of high technology.

The consequences of these changes have been broadly felt. For many people, jobs are no longer permanent but short-term, precarious and unstable. At all levels of the economy, people have become contract labourers, including many who, in the past, would have worked for government. The bottom of the economy is expanding; groups who traditionally have been barred from more stable employment are competing for low wage jobs. Youth, particularly those who do not have advanced levels of education, young single mothers, and others have difficulty entering the labour market (Gauthier, Mercier, 1994). Linked to globalization, the competition for work within and between nations further weakens worker attempts to improve their condition. Thus, a variety of processes contribute to the exclusion of many from the labour force and the growing number of people working in precarious unstable jobs (Benies, 1998 ; Fontan, 1999a).

An ideology of entrepreneurship

One of the characteristics of this period is the rise of entrepreneurial responses to the problem of work (Shragge, 1997; Dees, 1998). A defining element of the private sector is its promotion of the ideology of competition, individual initiative and the bottom line. This sector has pushed the marketplace as the vehicle for economic and social development as well as a means of curtailing the social role of the state. As a consequence of this pressure, the jobless are more and more dependent on the labour market with less and less cushioning from the state. In the wider society, business has reclaimed legitimacy as the supreme agent of socio-economic development, displacing the state and transcending national boundaries. As this dynamic intensifies, we face the contradiction of economic expansion simultaneous with growing poverty and homelessness (Fontan, 2000). Some of those excluded respond by participating in the informal economy through actions ranging from crime to barter (e.g. local economic trading systems) to "black" market and other kinds of exchanges.

Within the broader re-organization of the state-market relationship, community organizations specializing in training or economic development have put in place practices that are shaped by the new entrepreneurial culture. The assumption they make is that work is a means of personal redefinition and a way to counter social and/or economic exclusion. In other words, community organizations are engaging with the market and market relations as a social integration strategy for people who have been marginalized.

Community organizations are using an entrepreneurial model in different ways. Some use training for those without jobs as a means to foster placement in the labour market. Here we see examples of the partnership between government, community and sometimes the private sector. Most traditional training is individualized and tries to impart skills related to specific demands of the labour market (e.g. computer training) or more general behaviours that are part of the world of work. Other community organizations have used collective approaches to produce innovations. For example, groups that have been traditionally excluded from the labour market (e.g.people labelled disabled) have created their own work through community businesses as a way of challenging dominant assumptions about their capacities.

The state and the redefined role of community organizations

Governments around the world have responded to business dominance by redefining their role and approach (Teeple, 1995; Albrow, 1997). Reinterpreting Keynesian economics and reducing the universal welfare state, they have let unemployment rise and reduced support for those who have lost their jobs. Rather than attacking the issues of poverty and unemployment, governments have used cutbacks and workfare programs to attack the unemployed and the poor (Leduc Browne, 2000). Ironically, as the structural determinants of unemployment and poverty have increased, the state has promoted both rhetoric and programs that individualize the problem and "blame the victim." At the same time,

entrepreneurship is gaining currency in government circles as a solution to the plight of the unemployed. Directly administered by government departments or a variety of intermediary organizations, programs promote the development of business plans and personal initiatives for the unemployed and those on welfare. What is the message? Create your own job, join the labour force, or be subject to the "tough love" of new social assistance schemes.

Governments are also redefining their relationship with community organizations by shifting to them many programs from their own bureaucracies. Structured through partnerships, these organizations have taken on a service mandate (Leduc Browne, 1996; Fontan, 1999b). In the context of cutbacks, the services they provide are cheap, flexible alternatives to the bureaucratized services associated with the expansion of the welfare state in the 1970s. We would describe this in a post-Fordist context as a "flexible" welfare state in which without large bureaucracy and regularized, unionized work, programs can be run on the cheap and shifted easily from sector to sector depending on a variety of pressures.

The results are contradictory. On the plus side, there are new opportunities for community organizations, some of which act as "intermediaries" between the state and smaller local organizations. We see innovative approaches to service provision reflecting particular needs at the local level and new forms of social solidarity and community empowerment. At the same time, community organizations have been vulnerable to funding instability as well as being under-funded in relation to the services that they provide (White, 1997). In summary, community organizations now find themselves in a complex web of demands. From above there is the carrot of government funding and support; from below there are the needs and issues of local constituencies. From within this tension, innovations have been produced, specifically new approaches to the problems faced by those outside of the workplace.

CASE STUDIES

In this section, we present descriptions of three community organizations that work with people who are excluded from the mainstream labour market: the Homeworkers' Association in Toronto, Chic Resto-Pop in Montreal, and A-Way Express Couriers in Toronto. We chose to study these organizations because they are attempting to create new forms and traditions of labour while under considerable pressure to place people in the mainstream labour market. All of them perceive work as a central element in transforming people's sense of themselves and their connections with other people. They provide us with places in which to understand the intersection between social and economic exclusion, the labour market and redefined world of work, the community sector and the redefined programs of the welfare state. They afford us the opportunity to explore the impact of their activities on participants in terms of what and how they learn.

- The Homeworkers' Association (HWA) is an example of how a labour union responded to the restructuring of work by departing from traditional tactics of collective bargaining and strike action in favour of creative alliances and innovative strategies for working with displaced workers.[1]
- Chic Resto Pop illustrates the complex interaction between business development, job-training, political advocacy, and linkages to the wider culture of the community movement.
- A-Way Express demonstrates similar connections but from within a framework of self-help rather than professional service provision. Its goal is not integration but building an alternative labour market that redefines, accommodates, and organizes the capacities of a heavily stigmatized community.

UNITE – Homeworkers get organized[2]

The city of Toronto has been a major centre of garment production in Canada since industrialization. As an industry that makes use of what are assumed to be women's skills, the garment trade has always been an employer of female immigrant workers, firstly from Europe and later from Asia. According to

Statistics Canada data in 1986, 94 percent of sewing machine operators were born outside of Canada, as were 83 percent of pattern-makers and cutters, and 83 percent of the employees in various textile industry occupations (reported in The Toronto Star, September 21, 1992, A1). Whereas women constituted just 29 percent of the work force in manufacturing, 80 percent of them were in the garment industry (Borowy and Johnson, 1995). Thus, the garment and textile sector was and continues to be a major employer of immigrant labour.

Historically, homeworking and sweatshop operation was an integral part of the garment trade. With the formation of the International Ladies Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU), firstly in the US and later in Canada, garment workers became the few unionized female work force that enjoyed decent wages and employee benefits. Unlike some other sectors with heavy concentration of female immigrant workers, labour standard legislation and rights to collective bargaining protected garment workers. Since the 1980s, however, this has all changed. In the 1980s and early 1990s, Toronto witnessed the closing of many garment factories, and massive worker lay-offs. Employment dropped from 95,800 in 1988 to an estimated 62,800 in 1992, corresponding to the signing of the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the US. Between 1985 and 1992, the ILGWU membership dropped from a high of up to 80 percent to below 20 percent (Borowy, Gordon and al., 1993). What has happened?

From the point of view of economists and policy-makers, the garment industry in Canada is a "sunset' industry" because it has little chance of survival without heavy tariff and trade protection from global competition (Borowy, Gordon and al., 1993). For instance, the opening up of labour markets in the so-called "third world," especially the industrialization of the Asian Pacific Rim countries and the establishment of free trade zones there has enabled much cheaper garment production.

Concomitantly, control of the industry has shifted from manufacturers to large retail chains such as the Hudson's Bay Co. (which owns Zellers, Simpson's, Robinson's and Fields, K Mart). Retailers' strategy, to keep up with global competition, is to deliver the most fashionable clothes to the market quickly. This is made possible, among other things, by technological innovations such as electronic data interchange to control the production process. This kind of computerized technology enables retailers to keep better records of their stock and to keep less stock. Sales of garments on the rack in retail stores can be communicated to production plants almost instantaneously anywhere in the world. This cuts down on mass production, storage and other overhead costs. Retailers also demand quicker turn-around time for production, and that suppliers provide garments on consignment, and/or at last year's price.

Improved distribution and transportation systems also allow garments to be delivered more quickly to stores, even from far-away places. Trade agreements, such as NAFTA (The North American Free Trade Agreement), make it possible for retailers to order garments from countries such as Mexico that again undermines both manufacturers and workers in Toronto. Manufacturers in Toronto responded to their slip of control and technological changes in the following ways:

1. retire and get out of the business altogether. Since garment production is a relatively old industry in Toronto, many manufacturers have been in the business since the post-war period and are close to retirement age anyway.
2. produce off-shore, either by setting up factories in cheaper locations such as Mexico and Asian countries as mentioned before, or by contracting production to factories established in these areas. (This is also a strategy used by retailers to keep production costs low, thereby undermining local manufacturers.)
3. become sub-contractors to retailers by becoming jobbers. This is done by reducing the production plant, for example by retaining a few cutters, and laying off sewing machines operators, and by using homeworkers on a piece rate basis.

The effects of these changes are downsizing of industrial plants and factory closures in Toronto (and elsewhere in Canada). They in turn have led to massive lay-off and displacement of garment workers, many of who are women from Asian countries such as Hong Kong, Vietnam, and India. Thus, we see that work restructuring is not a uniform process. In the case of the garment sector, we see how it affected

female immigrant workers, who are mainly sewing machine operators, differently from male immigrant workers, who are mainly pattern enlargers and cutters. The latter (numerically much smaller) group are retained while the majority of sewing machine operators are laid off. This does not mean that they lose their jobs altogether. It means that they are now sewing garment at home on a piece rate basis, thereby earning non-union wages and possibly extending their work day to make the same amount of money (Ng 1998, 1999).

In response to these changes, the major union in the sector, the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU), developed a number of strategies to ameliorate the effect of the dramatic displacement of workers in the garment sector. Many of these strategies depart from traditional tactics of organized labour. From 1990, the ILGWU proposed legislative changes; conducted research; did organizing outside of the collective bargaining model; collaborated with governments and other unions to renew the industry; and participated in coalition building concerning garment workers. In 1995, after a long period of negotiation, the ILGWU merged with the other major union in the sector, the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU) to form a new union called UNITE (Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees). The myriad activities listed above represent the multi-faceted, innovative, and entrepreneurial ways of addressing the changing organization of work, not only in Canada, but globally, and is thus an interesting case study for our inquiry. The formation of UNITE signals a new era in the history of organizing within the garment and textile sector in response to globalization.

The remainder of this section outlines the activities undertaken by the ILGWU from 1990. With this backdrop our inquiry will focus on the Homeworkers' Association (HWA) formed by the ILGWU in March 1992, as a site of the non-formal and informal learning.

Research

To understand how the restructuring of the garment industry affected displaced workers in previously unionized plants, the ILGWU conducted research between 1990 and 1993. The research had three phases. Phase One consisted of an evaluation of existing training and adjustment programs. The outcome of this evaluation will be discussed later. Phase Two consisted of a survey of the working conditions of garment workers who were sewing at home (homeworkers). This was an attempt to discover how conditions, such as wage level, benefits, health and safety issues, had changed for garment workers as they moved into home sewing. The third phase of the study consisted of an analysis of the industry including policy analysis and tracking clothing labels to discover linkages between retailers and manufacturers. This gave the ILGWU a sense of how the industry had been restructured. The findings of these various studies were then used for different kinds of action such as in labour adjustment and coalitional work.

In addition, a follow-up research project was conducted on the experiences of displaced workers in one plant, The Great Sewing Exchange. This was supplemented by a comparative study on factory-based and sectoral-wide adjustment committees (ILGWU, 1994). One of us (Roxana Ng) was the investigator and author of the supplementary report based on her work in labour adjustment (see below).

Labour adjustment activities

The most immediate action undertaken by the ILGWU, as a result of the initial research, was to ameliorate the drastic effects of job loss on its workers. To this end, the ILGWU collaborated with ACTWU, the other union in the sector, and approached the federal and provincial governments for funds to set up a labour adjustment committee to look into ways of taking care of unemployed workers. The Apparel Textile Action Committee (ATAC) was established in the summer of 1991 to look into labour adjustment issues on a sector-wide, rather than plant by plant, basis.

ATAC had two arms. The policy arm was a committee composed of union, community and government representatives, with participation from relevant resource people such as Canada

employment centre representatives and program developers from educational institutions (e.g. community colleges) to develop strategies for worker retraining and redeployment. An expert who had knowledge and understanding of the issues chaired the committee. In the case of ATAC, knowledge of immigrant women workers was seen to be an asset. In this way, one of us (Roxana Ng) initially became involved in the situation of immigrant women workers in the garment industry.

The action arm was an office run by a hired co-ordinator and unemployed workers themselves. The office took care of the immediate needs of workers confronting job loss, which included counselling, applying for unemployment insurance, job search, applying for job training programs, and so forth. Given the pessimistic outlook of the garment industry at the beginning of the 1990s, attempts were made by the ATAC co-ordinator to enrol workers in ESL (English as a Second Language) classes to augment their chances of moving into re-training programs in other sectors. ATAC existed for three years, from 1991 to July 1994, the maximum period allowable under the federal Industrial Adjustment Service Program guideline.

Coalition building

In addition to looking after displaced workers, the ILGWU also organized and participated in a number of campaigns to draw public attention to the plight of workers in the garment sector. In 1991, a small group of people, including women from the ILGWU, the WIACT (Workers' Information and Action Centre of Toronto now defunct), Mujer a Mujer (an organization working with women in Mexico, the US, and Canada), and a law professor involved with NAC (the National Action Committee on the Status of Women), came together to discuss the situation of garment workers. This led to a formal workshop held on November 2, 1991, and the formation of the Coalition for Fair Wages and Working Conditions for Homeworkers. The objectives were to fight for fair wages and working conditions for homeworkers, to assist homeworkers to organize, to educate the public about the growth in homework and related issues, to lobby for better legislative protection for homeworkers, and to reach out to community and union groups to build a campaign to stop the exploitation of women workers. Active members of the Coalition included the ILGWU, the Ecumenical Coalition for Economic Justice, the WIACT, Parkdale Community Legal Services, York University's Centre for Research on Work and Society, Mujer a Mujer, NAC, Labour Council of Metropolitan Toronto and York Regions, and the Cross Cultural Communications Centre. The campaign was partially supported with funding from the ILGWU in New York.

In the ensuing years, the coalition was very active: It lobbied the provincial government for legislative changes that would give homeworkers, including domestic workers, more protection. It put forward resolutions in the convention of the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL, November 1991) for the labour movement to address the issue of homework. An example is the release of the names of three designers and clothing companies using homeworkers under illegal working conditions in the OFL Women's Conference in October 1992. In concert with this effort the Coalition launched a postcard writing campaign directed at three major retailers in Canada (Eaton, the Bay, and Dylex) urging them to produce clean clothes. This led to the Clean Clothes' campaign in 1993 that ranked employers according to the working conditions of their workers. The Clean Clothes List was publicized. These activities gained a lot of media attention, and made the public aware of the fact that homeworking was alive and well in Canada, and that homeworkers worked in appalling conditions.

As well, the Coalition began to make wider connections nationally and internationally. In November, 1992, it organized an international conference to share information on the oldest form of homeworking, clothing, with the newest form, telecommuting. During the conference, a public demonstration was organized in front of a major downtown Toronto retail store. Participants of another feminist conference occurring in Toronto at the same time joined this demonstration. Again, this led to a lot of media attention on the issue.

Formation of the Homeworkers' Association (HWA)

In January 1992, a sub-committee of the Coalition was formed to organize homeworkers. This is perhaps the most sustained effort made by the ILGWU to resist the impact of restructuring on workers. Representatives from the WIACT and Parkdale Community Legal Clinic worked with the ILGWU to develop an organizing plan. The Associate ILGWU Member Program (AIM) (run by the Associate Membership Department of the ILGWU) granted Toronto a formal charter that set up a new local, number 12. This led to the formation of the Homeworkers' Association, which hired its first co-ordinator in March, 1992, and was established formally in May.

The biggest challenge in organizing homeworkers was in locating them and understanding the underground network of contracting and homeworking. The methods used by the group included advertising in ethnic newspapers, provision of a hotline service for homeworkers, and word-of-mouth organizing. Other strategies included monthly legal clinics and social teas on Saturday afternoons throughout 1992; outdoor family trips on Saturdays in the summer of 1992; ESL classes in September 1992; a benefit plan introduced in early 1993, and a pilot women's leadership training course in the winter of 1994. This multi-pronged strategy of combining training courses, social activities, and service provision continues to this day, and provides a fertile ground for our study on informal learning.

Funding poses another major challenge. The HWA is service oriented and therefore requires much human resources to maintain the services, in addition to organizing. It cannot rely solely on membership dues: the dues have to be low because of members' low incomes. Support has to be sought from the union, from governments and other sources (such as private foundations). Yet, the difficulty for the ILGWU Ontario region was that the regular dues base had also seen a serious decline because of plant closures. The shortage of funds meant that the HWA was unable to expand much beyond the initial targeted community. In 1995, the HWA launched an outreach program to homeworkers in Spanish and South-Asian communities, funded by the Jobs Ontario Community Action' project for one year. But since the funding was only for one year, continuous provision of programs was difficult to maintain. Now, the HWA services a solely Chinese speaking membership for two reasons. They are the largest group of homeworkers. And since the ability to communicate in the homeworkers' language is essential to organizing them, due to limited funding a decision was made to focus on organizing within the Chinese community.

The most interesting aspect of the ILGWU, from our point of view, is its transition from the old style business unionism that was solidified in the hay day of the North American labour movement, to social unionism, to what activists in the early 1990s characterized as community unionism. Community unionism expands on social unionism by advocating that unions become integrally involved within their communities and form coalitions with other groups working on similar issues. As capital consolidates and expands its power base, some unionists recognize that it is important for unions to expand beyond their traditional base and organizing strategies (see Dagg, 1996). This move was not met without resistance within the union itself. But again the ILGWU addressed this creatively: in the summer of 1992, a special workshop was organized to bring together activist members of the local labour council, who were primarily male immigrant workers who had worked in the garment trade for a long time, and younger female workers who were homeworkers. The objective of this workshop was to enhance communication and mutual-understanding. It helped the development of a cohesive union approach to the changing structure of the garment industry in Canada.

In summary, the myriad activities undertaken by the ILGWU and through the Homeworkers' Association, provide numerous and interesting examples for us to understand how community organizations respond to the crisis of work and develop entrepreneurial ways of participating in the restructured economy.

CHIC RESTO-POP – Social Entrepreneurship as Work Readiness

In this section, we discuss the emergence of les entreprises d'insertions or training businesses in Quebec. Training businesses are new phenomena that have developed in different localities across

Canada. They vary between regions and in their emphasis but touch on social, economic and political dimensions and bring together several types of social practice. Jean-Paul Hautecoeur (1996) describes the new types of practice as follows:

> It is obvious that alternative networks and fields of work are growing up, less dependent on the free market and on state programmes, in a quest for durable solutions to the crisis of work, of the welfare state and of neo-capitalist destruction. The aim of such organizations is not to offer a faint hope of finding a job and becoming integrated ("vocationalized learning"), but rather to open up areas of useful work where neither the market nor public services operate ... and to create new local and regional solidarity by widening collective participation (p. 344).

The discussion that follows will focus on these organizations in Quebec. They provide training and jobs to those who are excluded from the labour market. The starting point for these initiatives is the situations and capacities of their clientele and/or members and the barriers they face in finding work. More important, these projects address the wider social situation of these individuals, creating a social and economic alternative. In addition, they provide a centre for social solidarity, and contribute to a broader social infrastructure in response to the cutbacks of government programs.

Training businesses are involved in finding ways for those outside of the labour market to find a way into it and at the same time they play a social role in the lives of the participants and in the wider community. Through training programs and related work, the businesses try to get their participant/employees "integrated" into the labour market. During the time in these businesses the participant is treated as a worker and receives a salary-through a government program. (The "employees" in the training businesses are in reality receiving their income from social aide (welfare) with a small amount in addition for participating in the program. They do not receive direct payment from the training businesses in most cases.) There is a limited period of time that an individual can stay in the "training-job" - less than a year.

Training businesses are attempts to bring together two types of practice: training, and business development, and at times, the production of a socially useful product or service. The target population is people who face serious barriers to employment, and other social problems linked to their marginal socio-economic status. Within these organizations there are variations, but all of them maintain a commitment to the personal development of those who participate in the training programs. Each of the organizations has developed autonomously with differing emphases. As well, the structures and processes within each organization vary, as do the relationships with government and other institutions. Thus, there is a diversity of practices within a general framework.

Wider Context

As we noted earlier, a growing number of people are excluded from or have limited attachment to the labour market. They face the contradiction of de-skilled jobs requiring higher levels of formal education. Exclusion from the labour market creates a circle in which lack of experience becomes a greater barrier to entry. Training businesses act partly as a bridge to either education or the mainstream market and partly as an alternative labour market. Thus, the first goal of training businesses is to try to find a way to create useful functions for those outside of the traditional labour market. This does not mean that the work is "sheltered". Training businesses are forced to deliver on a service and/or a product in the context of the marketplace. The problem of chronic high levels of unemployment is their primary issue, and therefore the marketplace demands for their product and services remain secondary to training.

Government policy in the area of social assistance has changed from a passive to an active approach. Welfare recipients who are classified as able to work are expected to be in training or educational programs that are designed to lead to labour market insertion. Many of the training businesses in Quebec are a community response to this shift. Caught between the administration of workfare programs and the

creation of alternative workplaces, training businesses have had to live a difficult balance. The choices for funding in many instances have been limited to these types of state programs. At the same time, training businesses are one of few options for people on social assistance that recognize the needs and capacities of social assistance recipients. Rather than viewing their organizations as dead-end, short-term experiences, some training business in Quebec have argued for greater social and economic validation of this work and stability for the participants. They have received some recognition from the government, but in this period of change their future is far from guaranteed.

Finally, with the changing nature of work and the redefinition of the roles of government and the community sector, this period is marked by one of instability and uncertainty. Given these changes, it is important that organizations begin to express their own definition of practice, the issues they face and how best they can meet their goals, and define strategies to work with those excluded from the labour force. The case study that follows articulates the directions and issues and problems faced by practitioners within the limits of the redefined welfare state and labour market conditions.

Hochelaga-Maisonneuve

Chic Resto-Pop[3] is located in the East End of Montreal, Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, an old industrial neighbourhood. After the Second World War, the working class population of approximately 80,000 and particularly those in unionized jobs, made gains in wages and working conditions in the context of the rapid growth of that period. In addition, the expanding provincial and federal welfare state provided income support programs As well as a variety of health, social service and educational programs. However, with the growth of the suburbs around the island of Montreal, many with unionized jobs left this district and moved to new working class suburbs; the population shrank from 82,000 in 1950 to 48,000 in 1991. During the same period, plant closures and relocation coupled with the recessions of the 1980s and the 1990s, and the forces of free trade, contributed to economic deterioration. Little in the way of economic growth has replaced these losses. The consequences have been severe. A document from Resto-Pop describes the situation:

> We are 47,645 in the Hochelaga-Maisonneuve community, but 40% of us live below the poverty line. Here, there are many single parent households (46.3%). We have experienced difficulties at school, and reading and writing are often difficult for many among us, also, more than 25% of our young do not complete high school...Thousands of jobs have disappeared from our community in recent years. We know that many hide their misery because they are ashamed. But people amongst us do not like a run down community with cries and conflicts. More than that we do not like the insecurity and embarrassment that our families are forced to live. (Chic Resto-Pop, Translation Eric Shragge)

The process of de-industrialization and the movement of those who had stable jobs to the suburbs have left a neighbourhood with a weak local economy, high levels of unemployment and poverty, and related social problems such as a large number of young people dropping-out of school and drug use.

Community organizations in this neighbourhood have a long history and still remain strong, innovative and energetic in responding to the social and economic problems of the community. The range of groups includes traditional charities, locally controlled and organized social service organizations, health clinics, cultural groups, and a number of groups with a tradition of mobilization on a variety of social questions. Many of the former industries had strong trade unions that have kept their ties with community organizations. The "popular movement" has organized itself around "Tables de Concertations", sectoral groupings that bring together representatives of community organizations to deal with common problems and issues.

With the economic decline of the area, community organizations have mobilized to find ways to revitalize the local economy. New partnerships between government, business, unions, and community organizations have been structured as part of this strategy. Community organizations established and

structured through these partnerships are being called upon to meet a variety of local needs through direct service provision. As a consequence, the state has granted greater legitimacy for the work of community organizations, but at the same time, their role and mandate has been defined by the demands of service delivery, leading to a reduction in oppositional activities by these groups.

Examples of some of the new initiatives include Joujouthèque, a toy rental service founded in 1978 that more recently added a repair workshop. Founded in 1983, Boulot Vers is an enterprise that manufactures furniture for day care centres and rooming houses and trains young unemployed. Funded by the three levels of government, a community economic development corporation (CDEC) called the Corporation de développement de l'Est de Montréal has programs that promote business development in the local community, support for new enterprise, and help the unemployed acquire training or advice about how to find jobs. Although these CED initiatives have made some progress, they have not made a dent in the huge problem of unemployment. Their role and impact is social rather than generating large-scale economic changes.

Recent changes in the welfare state have important implications for how Resto-Pop has developed. In particular, income support programs have not kept up with the needs of the poor, thus creating a demand for the supplementation of these benefits. Programs to reduce hunger including food banks and collective kitchens have become common in low-income communities. A second change was the introduction of workfare measures in the late 1980s, as the government of Quebec reorganized its social aid (welfare) programs (Shragge, 1997). These programs are designed for those considered able to work. Although they are not obligatory, there is a coercive aspect insofar as welfare rates are reduced for those who refuse to participate. Under the guise of training programs, recipients are placed in private businesses, community organizations, or educational programs. Funds for community organizations that incorporate training of welfare recipients became available. These programs have had little success in placing individuals in employment, particularly on a long-term basis, but have been useful nonetheless in their social aspects (Shragge and Deniger, 1997). Within this economic and social environment, individuals facing poverty and unemployment, and coalitions of existing organizations have promoted new initiatives such as the one that we will discuss.

Chic Resto Pop: Practices and Issues

Twelve welfare recipients organized Resto Pop, a community restaurant, in 1984. They had two purposes: to create jobs for the founding members and others on social assistance, and to provide quality, hot, and inexpensive meals for the poor in the community. These goals have been realized and the organization has both grown and broadened its activities. It has introduced a mobile kitchen to provide meals to local schools, and day camps in the summer. In addition, a musical festival, which is now part of an autonomous organization, was introduced in 1992. Resto-Pop serves three meals a day, five days a week. In 1984 it served meals for 50 people, in 1990- 250, and by 1995 it has reached 800.

Resto-Pop is a non-profit organization managed by a seven member Board of Directors. Members come from the church and the professions, and are almost equally divided between men and women. There is no staff representative on the board, and until recently there was no general assembly. The operating budget for 1994 was $800,000. Slightly less than half was from the three levels of government, while the rest was raised from sales of meals, bingo and donations. There are 19 full-time employees under the supervision of the director. Four employees are involved with administrative work, two co-ordinate the restaurant, and 15 others carry out the general work.[4]

Job development and training is a central concern of Resto-Pop. It takes in 105 trainees a year on an ongoing basis. The length of training varies between six and fifteen months. The trainees are all receiving welfare, and are participating in one of the workfare programs called Expérience de travail (EXTRA). This program was a controversial part of a welfare reform introduced in 1988 and many community organizations that could accept trainees have boycotted it. They have criticized the program because it did not create real jobs, and the lack of jobs made whatever training was received useless. Resto-Pop members believed that their using the program was in the interest of welfare recipients, as a

means of connecting those marginalized by poverty to a wider social process in which their labour was the basis of social re-integration.

One of the staff at Resto-Pop summarized this position. He stated:

> Quebec is not only confronted with a crisis of jobs, but also by a transformation in work. Faced with this transformation, one must not only reaffirm the principle of citizenship, one must also guarantee a minimal income to citizens, recognizing the existence and the importance of a new type of socially useful work. Resto-Pop works in this direction. (translation, ES)

Thus, Resto-Pop has attempted to use the shifting economy and the re-defined welfare state to be part of a wider movement in Quebec to create a locally based social economy.

According to one staff member, who supervised the trainees, participants are treated as workers with the responsibilities and rights attached to that role. It is attempting to break the dependency and passivity associated with individuals who have received Social Aid (welfare) for a long period. The goals of the training are to promote socially useful work that permits the individual to rebuild confidence, improve general work habits and learn new job-oriented skills.

The co-ordinator of Resto-Pop explained that one of the most important functions of the organization is to support the trainees. Psychological support and literacy training are provided by a neighbourhood organization, and a variety of programs linked to the preparation to work. The content of the training goes beyond the immediate tasks necessary to running a community restaurant, and includes topics such as social rights. The longer-term goal of training, according to one of the founders and a former co-ordinator of Resto-Pop, is to demonstrate that the marginalized people of the district can be other than clients of the services of community organizations, they can also be workers and effective managers.

Since 1992, Resto-Pop has carried out an annual study that shows the most frequent users of their program are single men, average age of 45, who live alone, and are receiving welfare or Employment Insurance. They eat on the average six to eight meals a week there. Resto-Pop provides more than meals; it is also a place for socialization where one can meet others in a similar situation. The large dining room is also used by community organizations for the provision of information and discussion of such issues as the social origins of poverty and the rights of those receiving welfare. Thus, Resto-Pop is simultaneously a training program, a socially supportive environment and place that provides meals for members of the local community.

In the fall of 1995, Resto-Pop moved in a new direction. Pierre Prud'homme, the staff person in charge of training, raised several critiques about the training and related government policies. He argued that the government continued to think about and to apply its welfare system as though it was a system of last resort, acting as if the recipients invented their own joblessness. Short-term training programs coupled with unemployment has institutionalized instability and social exclusion of parents from both economic and meaningful social roles. In light of this analysis, Resto-Pop asked the government to reform its training program and allow participants to stay for three years. The government refused arguing that they did not want to encourage dependence in a protected environment.

Frustrated by the lack of movement by government in a more progressive direction, and the continual increase in local poverty, the leaders of Resto-Pop called a conference to examine the underlying economic issues and the politics of deficit cutting, and lack of adequate government response. Several hundred community members participated in this event, culminating in a series of demands and a march to the office of their local provincial representative. Their demands touched fiscal and monetary policy, minimum wage, job creation and day care, and training, calling for a full employment through a variety of actions and innovations (Chic Resto-Pop, 1995). This high profile and successful event put Resto-Pop on the map as a leader in the current debate on poverty in Quebec.

A-WAY EXPRESS COURIERS – Using the Economy to Develop the Community

This section moves from a general description of major psychiatric survivor issues to an overview of three phases of the survivor movement.[5] After a brief comment on the political implications of a recent shift into economic development through "alternative businesses," we then describe the evolution and operation of A-Way Express Couriers, an exemplar of this particular form.[6]

Psychiatric survivor communities

Psychiatric survivor communities are complex. While some members believe in the biochemical basis for mental health problems, others believe that mental illness does not exist and that the mental health system is really about social control. Members hold a range of opinions on psychiatric treatment: those who support established treatment practices; those who want adjustments to practice; those who want real alternatives; and those who will not be satisfied until the traditional system is entirely abolished.

Regardless of ideological diversity, psychiatric survivors are bound together by a relentless commonality of life experiences. Having been assessed, diagnosed, treated, institutionialized and otherwise intervened upon, they share the experience of being misunderstood and feared by other members of society. Many doors have been closed to their full participation as citizens and many opportunities lost in terms of employment, housing, training and education. Their marginalization in these crucial areas mean that psychiatric survivors as a group are generally poor, unemployed and inadequately housed. Economic participation is fundamental to well being yet survivors often lack the most basic means to provide for themselves and their families. While thousands of mental health professionals make a living from the mental health service industry, survivors struggle desperately to gain access to the economy.

Three phases of organizing

Psychiatric survivors began to organize in the 1960's as the anti-psychiatry or ex-patient liberation movement (Burstow and Weitz, 1988; Dain, 1989). Bolstered by allied theorists such as Erving Goffman and R.D. Laing, they formed a separatist movement characterized by a loose network of the self-help groups (Weitz, 1984). Their efforts gave impetus to large-scale deinstitutionalization, a process that was driven by escalating hospital costs and facilitated by the introduction of psychotropic drugs. In Canada, social analysts in countless government reports and academic papers have dissected the ensuing return go community by hundreds of former mental patients.

The consensus is that the communities in question lacked the capacity to assist and support people who had spent long years in psychiatric hospitals. The necessary planning simply was not done; essential resources were not transferred (Trainor et al, 1992). Moreover, the medical establishment underestimated both the effects of institutional life and the side effects of long-term psychotropic drug use. For psychiatric survivors, these conditions set the stage for community life characterized not by acceptance and growth, but by grinding poverty, homelessness and social stigma. Their real suffering began after discharge from hospital.

The second phase of the psychiatric survivor movement was "consumerist" in nature. A feature of the 1980's, it was noted more for activist attempts to infiltrate and control the mental health system than by their attempts to overturn it. "Consumer participation" was the buzzword of the times. A tremendous amount of labour was expended by "consumers" and their professional "partners" on attempts to ensure that users of services had a voice in decision-making at all levels of the service system (Pape, 1988; Church, 1996b). By contrast, the survivor movement of the 1990's is (becoming) entrepreneurial.

In response to economic restructuring, and after a long history of service system failure, psychiatric survivors have taken up employment as an issue for which they are responsible. Consistent with the diverse nature of the community, members are approaching the question of work in three different ways. Some survivors are honing their job search and interview skills to improve their chances in competing for mainstream jobs (Lindsay, 1997). Others favour self-employment by attempting to start and run their own businesses. Still others are engaged in defining and practising community economic development

(CED). Their leaders use the language and processes of CED as a vehicle for community organizing. The emerging form and the focus of our discussion is the "alternative business" (Church, 1996a, 1997, 2000). Founded on strong notions of self-help and a separatist sensibility, alternative businesses can be considered a form of anti-psychiatry. At the same time, their leaders sometimes partner with the mental health system in the tradition of "consumer participation." Thus, there are continuities and discontinuities with previous phases of the survivor movement.

Survivor CED is characterized by an ongoing concern for process. Community businesses are started very simply, by getting a few people together to learn about each other's skills and to generate ideas. Development proceeds through practical problem solving. Organizational structures are sufficiently flexible to accommodate employee needs. Survivor-run businesses make use of peer rather than professional training and skills development. They operate with the expectation that participants will make mistakes and "fail forward." Participatory management is a key feature, accomplished through board membership and affirmative hiring. Both give survivor employees experience in decision-making, a critical necessity for leadership development. Survivor-run businesses sometimes partner with other organizations or agencies but they do so cautiously, with a close eye to future independence. As most operate with a creative blend of public dollars and employee-generated revenues, they value persistent funding partners.

Psychiatric survivors involved in community business development have ceased to look to the mainstream economy for solutions to the severe unemployment problems (estimated to be 85%) that affect their members. Excluded from the labour market for decades, they have decided to make it a virtue and create a parallel market for survivors alone. To that extent, they too have embraced entrepreneurial culture. They have not, however, accepted the dominant notion of what being a successful entrepreneur means. Survivor run businesses maintain a commitment to employing the most poor and vulnerable members of their community, people who have been classified as permanently unemployable on top of being mentally ill. The businesses do not screen for the most skilled and experienced. They do not take the cream of their applicants. Most take applications on first come, first served basis. The major implication of working with these folks is a reliance on government grants for some portion of business revenue. Thus, financial self-sufficiency is not the key criteria for success in these initiatives; profit is not the bottom line.

Survivors doing CED have evolved a qualitative standard for success to balance the demands for quantitative data made by most funding bodies. It includes understanding survivor-run businesses as sites for learning, participation and the establishment of community. Beyond job skills, survivor employees learn to become decisions-makers in the businesses through membership on boards and committees. These processes are training for democratic participation, something that was stripped away from many through psychiatric treatment and service provision. Survivor CED is a recent development that takes in a thin slice of the population. Significantly, it is a slice that no one else wants. For these folks, employment becomes a real possibility when it is a collective process and responsibility. "The goal of survivor-controlled businesses," argues OCAB, "is not improvement in the skills, behaviours and general functioning of employees. Rather, it is empowerment" (Church 1997: 36). Success is a sense of ownership, a voice in making decisions. Thus, in the face of massive economic restructuring, OCAB calls psychiatric survivors to empowered community.

Implications

How does this play in the current climate? The election of the Tories in September 1995 created enormous uncertainty about the future of survivor businesses in general. Their leaders anticipated that the formidable new political (economic) agenda might force the OCAB to retreat from business development into defending the existing rights and entitlements of workers in survivor run businesses. Now, in the second term of the Harris government, two things are clear:

1. There has been tremendous support for survivor-controlled community businesses. While other

groups on social assistance became subject to workfare, the new Ontario Disabled Support Program Act (ODSPA) created a separate and more supportive income and employment support program for people with disabilities. Particularly crucial for the survivor community was government agreement to grandfather existing Family Benefits Allowance recipients into ODSP, and to ensure rapid reinstatement of benefits for anyone who attempts to work. Survivors worked behind the scenes to influence the provisions of this Act, got what they wanted and then gave it public support

2. There has been a multi-faceted attack on the rights and entitlements of people who have experienced psychiatric treatment and services. The range of actions began with the dismantling of subsidized housing but most critical for survivors was the government's move to introduce community treatment orders. Survivors were/are publicly opposed to community treatment orders, known in their community as "leash laws." As a founding member of the Care Not Cuffs Coalition, OCAB organized a survivor-only consultation with the government representative during which a range of speakers argued for "a job, a home and a friend." They also argued for the education of doctors into proper use of the existing mental health legislation.

A-Way Express: A Success Story

A-Way Express Courier Service began as a worker co-operative. It was created under the auspices of the Applause Community Development Corporation (ACDC), a non-profit corporation that intended to develop a number of democratic workplaces for consumer/survivors of psychiatric treatment and services. ACDC gave up the notion of a conglomerate in the face of nervous provincial funders who were willing to support only a single non-profit business. A-Way became that business and continues to operate as a division of ACDC. The idea of a business run by and for psychiatric survivors came from the survivor community itself. In 1985, users of community support services from Progress Place and Houselink Community Homes initiated discussions with agency staff about the possibilities of developing innovative work opportunities. Their request was timely. The previous year the final report of the Toronto Mayor's Task Force on Discharged Psychiatric Patients pointed to supportive, part-time flexible jobs as a primary need of this constituency.

By 1986, with the help of consultant Jacques Tremblay, a discussion group had formed. It put forward the notion of replacing work projects and handouts with empowering workplaces in which employees could be supported to become more independent. This group met weekly for the next year to develop the concept. Following a feasibility study, start-up and initial operating costs totaling $89,000 were secured from several sources: the Ontario Ministry of Health, the Ontario Ministry of Housing, the City of Toronto's community economic development fund and the Holy Trinity Foundation. A-Way Express opened its doors on June 1, 1987.

A-Way Express started out in an office equipped with a couple of telephones and a typewriter. The business had a manager, four office staff hired by the couriers, ten couriers and about thirty customers. By 1992, it had expanded to 45 couriers and seven office staff including a manager and executive director; there were 700 customers. By 1993, the company had 800 to 1,000 active accounts. A-Way currently had 45 couriers, 17 part-time office staff and over 1,200 customer accounts. Steady expansion has meant four different homes for the company. In the spring of 1999, it moved from cramped quarters over a dry cleaner's on Broadview Avenue to bright, spacious digs further east on the subway line.

Unlike conventional couriers, A-Way employees don't use bikes or cars. They get around on Toronto Transit (TTC): by subway and streetcar, by bus and on foot. Couriers come into the office in the morning to find out about their first delivery. After that, they move around the city on instructions from a dispatcher back at the office. Given the density of traffic in downtown Toronto, customers often get quicker service from A-Way than they would from couriers who use other modes of transport. It also means that survivor couriers do not have to struggle with parking or mechanical problems; those who experience side effects from psycho-tropic medication are not eliminated from employment.

In the beginning, A-Way customers came primarily from the public and voluntary sectors. They

included co-ops, social agencies, health services as well as provincial and municipal government departments. As the business developed, it put considerable effort into creating a private sector market. A-Way continues to rely on government offices and non-profit organizations for business but over half of its customers are in the private sector. They include law firms, medical offices, consulting companies and financial services. A-Way offers these customers message delivery with confidentiality; the business also delivers small packages. The shortest delivery within the service area (transit system and nearby streets) costs $4.00 with additional fees for more distant destinations. The business now delivers to a wider geographic area, having expanded east and west. Some deliveries previously more expensive have become cheaper.

A-Way Express operates on revenues generated from its courier service as well as grants from the Ontario Ministry of Health. Couriers work on commission and, depending on how fast they travel, can make the equivalent of five to seven dollars per hour. The rate of pay is set at about 70 percent of service charges. Some of the newer couriers are not on disability benefits. They earn 85 percent of commission and can make as much as ten dollars per hour. Couriers may work as many hours as each decides will fit his/her needs. A minimum shift is four hours. Most employees work at least two shifts; the average is three.

ACDC by-laws initially provided for a board composed one-third by social workers and business people, and two-thirds by survivors who were also workers. There has been evolution over the years. Currently, A-Way is composed of a board, a management team and the staff. On the ten-person board, 50 percent of the members are employees. The remaining 50 percent are "outside" members with expertise in business or non-profit management - they may or may not also be survivors. The management team includes the office and marketing managers, executive director, head dispatcher, bookkeeper, primary phone order-taker and two courier representatives. This team meets biweekly to discuss current business, and is responsible for all operations, office administration, implementation of board policies and procedures and purchases. From the beginning, full staff meetings have been held monthly at which members can raise concerns and make recommendations. Staff members have ultimate decision-making power because of their representation at every level of the business, and through formal reviews of goals and objectives at annual general meetings.

About five years ago, A-Way went through the most significant shift in its 12-year history. During a crisis of financial management, leadership of the organization passed from the hands of service providers to psychiatric survivors. After a period of restructuring under the direction of interim co-directors, Laurie Hall, formerly a courier and office worker in the business, was hired to replace the previous director who had resigned. Although the task was tense and stressful, employees were deeply involved in keeping things afloat through this transition. The difficult benefit of their actions was the realization that they could indeed run the business by themselves. This shift took place in the context of broader struggles by the psychiatric survivor movement to influence the shape of Ontario's mental health service systems through "consumer" participation and control. It took place in the context of support from OCAB, its umbrella organization. The importance of being survivor-directed and controlled is now firmly entrenched in A-Way's culture. This is signified through the structures outlined above but also through less obvious symbols. In the old days, none of A-Way's employees had keys to the office; they often found themselves standing around outside waiting for someone else to open the door. Today, there are many keys, all in employee hands. They let each other in.

A-Way is overt about its politics. Removing the stigma attached to mental illness means showing the public what consumer/survivors can do when they are given the chance. Consumer/survivors identify themselves openly, something that A-Way's promotional and publicity material clearly does. Numerous newspaper articles and the daily presence of the clearly marked A-Way courier bags on the streets work to educate the public. A-Way's participation in relevant public hearings and government consultations, on the regional council of the Mental Health Steering Committee and on the Trillium Foundation's advisory council ensures that the perspectives of consumer/survivors are heard in broader circles including among politicians. Recognizing the importance of being involved in the community, some A-Way employees also serve on the boards of other organizations, The atmosphere at A-Way is one of

teamwork. There is a substantial relief for survivors to being "out" with their illness, to being in an environment of shared experiences, where idiosyncracies are more readily accepted. The organization's participatory management mechanisms help foster a common understanding of what's going on and a sense of responsibility for the business that only time can develop. This supportive team environment promises to keep A-Way as the flagship survivor business in Ontario.

DISCUSSION

The cases described above provide the background for us to further our exploration of the learning experiences of marginalized groups, be they immigrant women, psychiatric survivors, or people on social assistance. While further and more detailed work is necessary to identify more precisely how learning takes place in the three sites (the Homeworkers Association, A-way Express, and Chic Resto-Pop), we can make the following observations. They provide a guide for our in-depth exploration of (informal) learning at a later stage of the project.

Methodologically, although we began with the working definition of informal learning, vis-a-vis non-formal, advanced by NALL, our review of the case studies suggests that the distinction between formal, non-formal and informal learning overlaps; these types of learning do not merely exist along a continuum. Indeed, we found that it does not make sense to distinguish between the learning that takes place in a structured vis-a-vis 'informal' environment, because frequently informal learning occurs within non-formal and formal educational processes.

For example, the workers who attend a basic sewing class organized by the HWA may be regaining a sense of a social and collective identity in addition to learning how to operate an industrial sewing machine. A compelling example is how a worker at A-Way talked about it as a place of learning about self in addition to the skills she acquired as a mail courier. Thus, in our in-depth exploration, we will not start with an a-priori definition; rather, our investigation will be guided by the participants' definition of learning in terms of process and content.

At the same time, the questions that interest us the most about these settings are:

- How do people acquire new knowledge to transform their definition of self? The A-Way example given is illustrative of this transformation.
- How do people embody the knowledge provided? How do they resist and/or subvert it?
- How do they learn democratic and political participation in a society that upholds hierarchy, individuality, and passivity?
- What is the role of the organization's leadership in structuring and envisioning a process that encourages and facilitates a counter vision and analysis of society, and how is this vision transmitted in the learning process?

Thus, we will pay special attention to the following areas in our exploration:

- The physical and emotional spaces of the learning process. For example, the kitchen area in A-Way and the lounge at the HWA are places where members congregate, interact, and exchange information on their problems and social rights as citizens and workers. Emotionally, whereas some participants attend classes or programs with an attitude of acquiring new knowledge, some attend for other reasons (e.g., they are lonely). Thus, people's attitudes or emotional spaces are an element in the learning process.
- The power dynamics (such as gender, race, background, age) operative in the learning environment. These include the organizational structure that shapes the content of the curriculum, interactions between the instructor/facilitator and learners, and among learners. The assumption here is that no learning situation is neutral. Power relations operate to enhance or hinder the learner's experience. Explicating how these dynamics operate will contribute to a more complex and nuanced understanding of the learning process.

Finally, while in this monograph we have talked about the three cases as if they were a coherent unit, in our further exploration we need to dis-aggregate the groups. It is clear that there is a distinction between the leadership, the teacher/facilitator, and the learners in terms of the roles they play in the processes we aim to describe. But what about divisions within the leadership and within the other participants? In A-Way, for instance, there is a distinction between couriers and office staff. In HWA, garment workers are internally divided in terms of factory workers and those who sew at home (homeworkers). How do these different positions shape learning and what is learned?

FINAL WORDS

This monograph presents the three case studies in our project by situating them in their social, economic, and organizational contexts. Out of this background discussion we identify the methodological and conceptual issues we need to take into account in exploring in more depth how marginalized groups use the learning opportunities presented to them in a restructured social, political and economic environment. By exploring how segments of the marginalized population define their own learning and by seeing non-formal and informal learning as overlapping and simultaneous processes, our study will both disrupt the working definition of informal leaning by NALL and extend it.

NOTES

1. The HWA is an organization formed to provide garment workers, formerly working in factories, with a social space in which to share experiences as workers who now sew at home. Although it is not part of the formal structure of UNITE, the garment workers' union, it is affiliated with UNITE because it grew out of the massive displacement of unionized workers when the garment sector restructured itself in the early 1990's. Although not a community organization per se, UNITE's practice in working collectively with those who have lost their jobs is similar to community organizations that work with the unemployed.

2.This section on the Homeworkers Association draws on a background paper by Yuklin Renita Wong and interviews and fieldwork conducted by Roxana Ng during 1998-1999.

3. This section on Chic Resto-Pop was developed from material published by Shragge and Fontan (1996a, 1996b)

4. Although Chic Resto-Pop follows much of the practices of an entreprise d'insertion it is not a member of the formal coalition of these organizations in Quebec called Le Collectif des Entreprises d'Insertions. The reason is that it has chosen to work with people who are more marginal to the labour market than some of the other businesses.

5. In 1983, it was still fairly common to hear people in the community mental health field talking about the "mentally ill" or the "psychiatrically disabled." Several years later, the term "consumer" of service was being used to challenge those terms. In 1990, the term "consumer/survivor" first appeared in a brief to government (Church and Reville, 1989). It was intended to reflect the language disputes that were going on at the time; its use has since become prevalent. The term "psychiatric survivor" was introduced to Canada in 1989 by British survivors during the first independent national conference of mental health service users in this country. It caught on and is now widely used. All of these terms are in use to some degree depending on the politics of the people involved. In this paper, we have used "psychiatric survivors" because it is the term of choice among the people with whom we work. It continues to be a controversial term among mental health professionals.

6. .The material on psychiatric survivors and economic development in this chapter was developed from articles and community documents written by Church (1996a, 1997, 1999, 2000).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Albrow, M. (1996) The global age. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Apparel Textile Action Committee (ATAC) Final report. March 9, 1993-July 8, 1994.

Bakker, I. (Ed.) (1996) Rethinking restructuring: Gender and change in Canada. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Benies, N. (1998) Chômage, précarité et pauvreté dans les pays capitalistes. In R. Poulin, P. Salama (Dir.) L'insoutenable misère du monde. Hull: Vent d'Ouest, 255-294.

Borowy, J., Gordon, S., Lebans, G. (1993) Are these clothes clean? The campaign for fair wages and working conditions for homeworkers. In L.Carty (Ed.) And still they rise: Feminist political mobilizing in contemporary Canada. Toronto: Women's Press, 299-330

Borowy, J. & Johnson, T. (1995) Unions confront work reorganization and the rise of precarious employment: Home-based work in the garment industry and the federal public service. In C. Shenk & J. Anderson (Eds.) Re-shaping work: Union responses to technological change. Toronto: Ontario Federation of Labour, Technology Adjustment Research Programme, 29-47.

Boyer, R. (1995) The capital labour relations in OECD countries: From the Fordist "golden age" to contrasted national trajectories. Paris: CEPREMAP, Working Papers, # 9020

Burstow, B. and Weitz, D. (Eds.) (1988) Shrink resistant: The struggle against psychiatry in Canada. Vancouver: New Star.

Chic Resto-Pop, (1994) Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, Montréal, unpublished paper, 1.

Church, K. (2000) Strange bedfellows: Seduction of a social movement. In E. Shragge and J-M. Fontan (Eds.) The social economy: International perspectives and debates. Montreal: Black Rose.

Church, K. (1999) Appropriating evaluation at A-Way Express Couriers. Toronto: A-Way Express Couriers. 416-424-2266.

Church, K. (1997) Because of where we've been: The business behind the business of psychiatric survivor economic development. Toronto: Ontario Council of Alternative Businesses.

Church, K. (1996a) Business (not quite) as usual: Psychiatric survivors and community economic development in Ontario, in E. Shragge (Ed.) Community economic development: In search of empowerment (2nd edition), Montreal: Black Rose, 48-71.

Church, K. (1996b) Beyond 'bad manners:' The power relations of 'consumer participation' in Ontario's community mental health system, Canadian Journal of Community Mental Health, 15 (12), 27-44.

Church, K. and Reville, D. (1989) Do the right thing* right. Canadian Review of Social Policy, 26, 77-81.

Dagg, A. (1996) Organizing homeworkers into unions: The Homeworkers' Association of Toronto, Canada. In E. Boris & E. Prugl (Eds.) Homeworkers in global perspective: Invisible no more. London: Routledge, 239-258.

Dain, N. (1989) Critics and dissenters: Reflections on 'anti-psychiatry' in the United States,"Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences, 25, 3-24.

Dees, J. G. (1998) Enterprising nonprofits. Harvard Business Review, January-February, 55-67.

Fontan, J.M. (2000) Entre la gestion socialisée et l'autogestion d'une pratique, quel devenir citoyen pour l'itinérant? In D. Laberge, (Dir.) Études sur l'errance urbaine. Québec: Multimondes.

Fontan, J.M. (1999a) Le Canada un pays riche appauvri! Organisations & territoires, 8, (1et 2), 43-55.

Fontan, J.M. (Dir.) (1999b) Diagnostic dynamique de l'offre de services d'intgération et d'insertion en emploi sur l'île de Montréal. Montréal: Service aux collectivités, Université du Québec à Montréal.

Fusulier, B., Fontan, J.M. (1998) Fondements, ébranlement et dépassement de la société salariale. La revue nouvelle, n. 7 et 8, tome 108, 54-69.

Gauthier, M., Mercier, L. (1994) La pauvreté des jeunes. Québec: Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture.

Hautecoeur, J.P (1996) Basic education towards self-reliance and community development in J.P. Hautecoeur (Ed.) Alpha 96: Basic Education and Work, UNESCO Institute for Education, Hamburg Germany, 323-346.

Hayden, A. (1999) Sharing the work, sparing the planet: Work time, consumption, and ecology. Toronto: Between the Lines.

International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Ontario District Council (June 1994) Facing factory closures in the garment industry.

Leduc Browne, P. (2000) The neo-liberal uses of the social economy: Non-profit organizations and workfare in Ontario" in E. Shragge and J-M. Fontan (Eds.) The social economy: International perspectives and debates. Montreal: Black Rose.

Leduc Browne, P. (1997) Les Sources de la pauvreté, les moyens de la combattre Cahiers de recherche sociologique, 29,119-135.

Leduc Browne, P. (1996) Love in a cold world: The voluntary sector in an age of cuts. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

Lindsay, J.D. (1997) Steps to employment: A workbook for people who have experienced mental health problems. Toronto: Canadian Mental Health Association (National).

Livingstone, D. (1999) Exploring the icebergs of adult learning: Findings of the first Canadian survey of informal learning practices. The Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education, 13 (2), 49-72.

Lochhead, C, Ross, D (1997) Left poor by the market: A look at family poverty and earnings. Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development.

Lochhead, C, Shalla, V (1996) Delivering the goods: Income distribution and the precarious middle class. Perception, Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development.

Manicom, L (Ed) (November 1992) From the double day to the endless day. Proceedings from the conference on homeworking. Toronto: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

Narayan, U. (1988) Working together across difference: Some considerations on emotions and political practice. Hypatia, 3 (2), 31-47.

Network for New Approaches to Lifelong Learning. (1999) Wrestling with the iceberg: Exploring informal learning. Thematic statement for NALL's 1999 annual conference. Toronto, Ontario.

Ng, R. (1998) Work restructuring and re-colonizing third world women: An example from the garment industry in Toronto. Canadian Woman Studies, 18 (1), 21-25.

Ng, R. (1999) Homeworking: Home office or home sweatshop? Report on current conditions of homeworkers in Toronto's garment industry. Toronto: Network for New Approaches to Lifelong Learning (NALL), The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, in cooperation with UNITE (Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees),Ontario District Council.

Pape, B. (1988) Consumer participation: From concept to reality. Toronto: Canadian Mental Health Association (National).

Piketty, T. (1997) L'économie des inégalités. Paris: la Découverte.

Pulkingham, J. & Ternowetsky, G. (Eds.) (1996) Remaking Canadian social policy: Social security in the late 1990s. Halifax: Fernwood.

Rifkin, J. (1995) The end of work. New York: Tarcher/Putnam.

Schellenberg, G., Clark, C (1995) Temporary employment in Canada: Profils, patterns and policy considerations. Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development.

Shragge, E. (Ed.) (1997) Workfare: Ideology for a new underclass. Toronto: Garamond.

Shragge, E. and Fontan, J-M. (1996a) L'entreprise sociale le Chic Resto-Pop. Nouvelles practiques sociales, 9 (2), 117-136.

Shragge, E. and Fontan, J-M. (1996b) Chic Resto-Pop: New community practice in Quebec" Community Development Journal. 31 (4), 291-301.

Shragge, E. and Deniger, M-A. (1997) Workfare in Quebec. In E. Shragge (Ed.) Workfare: Ideology for a new underclass. Toronto: Garamond, 59-84.

Teeple, G. (1995) Globalization and the decline of social reform. Toronto: Garamond.

Trainor, J., Church, K., Pape, B., Pomeroy, E., Reville, D., Tefft, B., Lakaski, C., and Renaud, L. (1992) Building a framework for support: Developing a sector-based policy model for people with serious mental illness. Canada's Mental Health, 40 (1), 25-29.

Weitz, D. (1984) On our own: A self-help model. In D. Lumsden (Ed.) Community mental health action. Ottawa: Canadian Public Health Association.

White, D. (1997) Contradictory participation: Reflections on community action in Quebec in B. Wharf and M. Clague (Eds.) Community organizing: Canadian experiences. Toronto: Oxford, 62-90.

Yalnizyan, A. (2000) Canada's great divide: The politics of the growing gap between rich and poor in the 1990's. Toronto: Centre for Social Justice.